

# Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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**THURSDAY** DECEMBER 18, 2003

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I N S I D E

# Around the CNMI



Grand prizewinner Edith Capalitan (center) poses for photo with Mel Estabillo, Mobil promotions (left), Ren Mabesa, Terminal Manager (second from left), Anthony Wenceslao, Territory Manager Guam/CNMI (second from right), and Cliff Jones, Station Operator (right) after the drawing of the grand prize winner in the Get Into Gear promotion of Mobil Oil.

EDITH G. ALEJANDRO

## Contract worker wins Mobil's \$5K grand prize

A 39-year-old Filipina contract worker rushed to Mobil Oil gasoline station in Chalan Kiya after hearing her name Saturday as this year's grand prize winner of a \$5,000-worth of high-tech package.

Edith Capalitan of Kagman arrived at the gas station around 1:30pm Saturday to confirm her identity after Mobil Oil CORS Territory Manager Guam/CNMI Retail Sales Anthony Wenceslao and other Mobil Oil officials drew the grand prize winner of its six-week "Get Into Gear High Tech Package" promotion.

Capalitan got the chance to choose from three technology packages: a Home Theater System Package, an Amazing Game Room Package, and a Car Lovers Package. The grand prize winner opted for the Home Theater Package, which includes a 52-inch color television and a DVD-VCD player, among other entertainment appliances that would cover the amount of \$5,000.

"I would like to thank Mobil Oil for this promotion. I am so happy and I did not know that I won. They called me up and I was so surprised. I have been patronizing Mobil since I got here six years ago. It has been

Mobil ever since up to now," Capalitan said.

According to Wenceslao, the promotion began on Jan. 29 and culminated Saturday after the raffle drawing of the promotion's grand prizewinner. Prior to the drawing, Mobil Oil had been giving away technology and electronic prizes to lucky patrons.

"Since the promotion began, we have given away picture-capable cellular phones, GameBoy, mp3 players, digital cameras, DVD players, bottles of Pepsi, and Mobil caps and t-shirts. Customers who refueled for a minimum of \$10 get the chance to win instant prizes and another chance to join the \$5,000-worth high-tech package.

"This has been a six-week promotion and we hope to get more promotion in the future," said Wenceslao. He acknowledged the assistance of the Pacific Trading Co. for all the Pepsi products that were raffled off during the promo period.

Aside from Wenceslao, also present during the awarding yesterday were Row Sunga, managing director of DDB, Mel Estabillo, Mobil Oil promotions; Cliff Jones, Mobil Oil Station Operator, and Ren Mabesa, Mobil Oil Terminal Manager. *(Edith G. Alejandro)*

## Preparation heats up for WWII commemoration

Preparations for the 60th anniversary of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian is now in full swing as key players shifted to higher gear in preparing for the historical celebration in June 2004.

The commemoration will start on June 10, 2004, which will also mark the unveiling of the new Visitors Center at the American Memorial Park. The center will feature artifacts, memorabilia and other remnants of the war, highlighting the sacrifices made by the American forces and the local population during the war.

"Military dignitaries, civilian leaders and government officials will gather at this event to pay to tribute to the veterans of all wars," officials said.

The Babauta administration has invited all veterans, families of veterans, military educators and historians to attend the mid-June 2004 celebration in honor of the men and women of the U.S. Armed

Forces who served in the Pacific during World War II.

The steering committee has lined up several activities that include tours of the American Memorial Park's Visitor Center and WWII Exhibit, dedication of the American-Japanese Friendship Memorial, dedication of the Marianas Memorial, unveiling of the commemorative stamp, time capsule dedication, and the Veterans of Foreign War convention on June 11 to 18, 2004.

Retired General Paul Tibbets, the man who piloted the Enola Gay, will return to the islands to participate in the ceremony. Tibbets would be the keynote speaker.

Many other veterans of the campaign, their families and friends, historians and others interested in the War in the Pacific will be returning to honor the men and women of America's "greatest generation." *(Edith G. Alejandro)*

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Saipan Tribune

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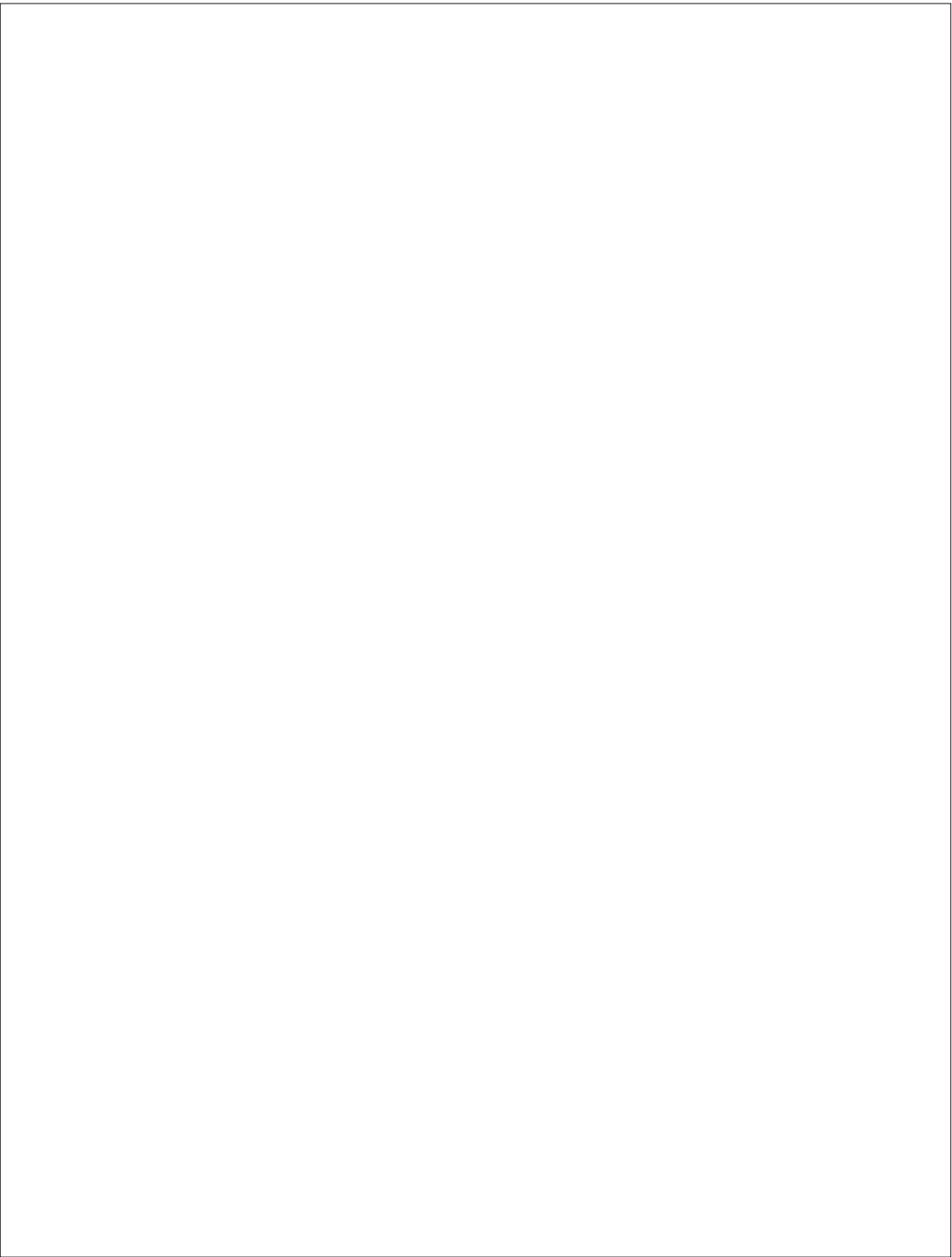
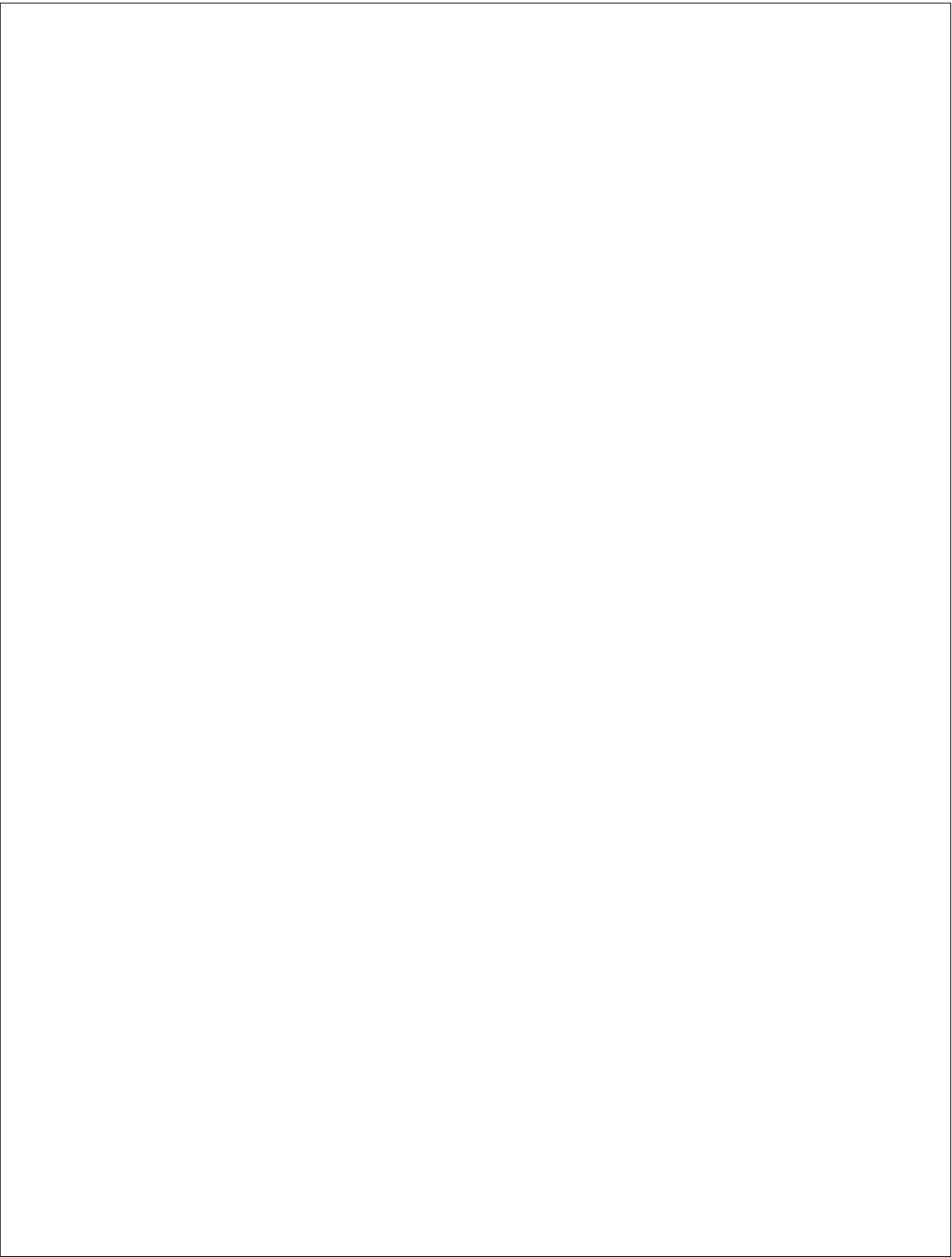
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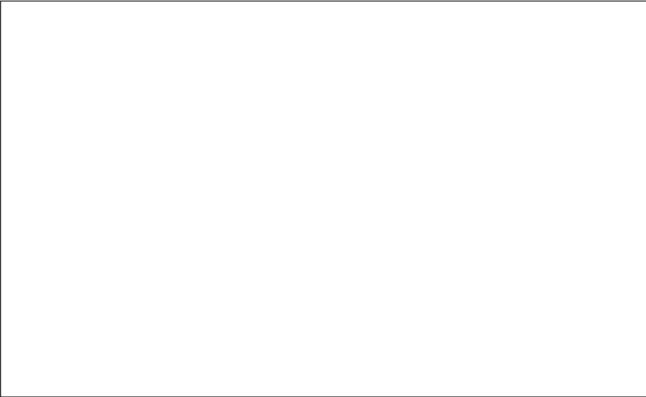
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WEATHER FORECAST




PICTURE TIME: 2:25 A.M., DECEMBER 17, 2003  
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.


A monsoon trough extends from 6N130E through a tropical disturbance near 8N145E and finally to near 5N160E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the disturbance are found in the Mariana islands as well as between Yap and Chuuk or between 4N and 16N from 139E to 153E. Just east of the monsoon trough, a surface trough of low pressure continues to near the equator at 168E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are developing north and east of the trough or within 100 miles either side of a line from 9N160E to the equator at 173E, including Kosrae. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across portions of the Marshall islands, between 4N and 16N from 170E to 180.




**SAIPAN AND TINIAN**  
Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.  
**Winds:** East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers.  
**Temperature:** Lows near 78. Highs near 86.




**GUAM AND ROTA**  
Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.  
**Winds:** East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers.  
**Temperature:** Lows near 78. Highs near 86.




**PALAU**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 10 kt.




**POHNPEI**  
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** East at 10 kt.




**YAP AND ULITHI**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 10 kt.






















**KOSRAE**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Southeast at 10 kt.



**CHUUK**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers with a slight chance of thunderstorms.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 10-15 kt.



**MAJURO**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.  
**Winds:** East at 10-15 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
 Auckland	Cloudy	61F (16C)	49F (9C)
 Beijing	Sunny	44F (7C)	26F (-3C)
 Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	74F (23C)	61F (16C)
 Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86F (30C)	72F (22C)
 London, England	Cloudy	56F (13C)	45F (7C)
 Los Angeles	Cloudy	69F (21C)	51F (11C)
 Manila	Cloudy	88F (31C)	71F (22C)
 Melbourne	Sunny	73F (23C)	54F (12C)
 Miami	Partly Cloudy	84F (29C)	75F (24C)
 New York, NY	Cloudy	52F (11C)	48F (9C)
 Osaka	Rain	54F (12C)	46F (8C)
 Paris	Cloudy	53F (12C)	41F (5C)
 Pusan	Rain	58F (14C)	43F (6C)
 Rome	Partly Cloudy	55F (13C)	39F (4C)
 Salem, Oregon	Rain	54F (12C)	38F (3C)
 San Francisco	Sunny	64F (18C)	47F (5C)
 Seoul	Rain	52F (11C)	45F (7C)
 Tokyo	Rain	55F (13C)	49F (9C)
 Washington, DC	Cloudy	60F (16C)	48F (9C)

# Guerrero: Yangetmai has the right to question Teacher Rep poll result

Board of Education member Herman Guerrero commented yesterday that Marianas High School teacher James Yangetmai has the prerogative to question the results of the recently concluded Teacher Representative election, which the Association of Commonwealth Teacher candidate lost to Kagman High School teacher



Guerrero

Ambrose Bennett. “Anyone [who] is running can always question [the election result]. I think they [administration] need to ensure whether he has valid points or not. If it’s not valid, then at least you settle the issue. And there’s no cloud hanging over the whole process. “It’s a democratic process. People who lose sometimes ask or think there are discrepancies or procedures [that were] not followed. If that is the case then the people that are conducting the election needs to refute them and say that this is what we did, and this the process and the procedures,” said the official, who recently lost the BOE chairmanship to Roman Benavente. Yangetmai, who lagged behind Bennett by 16 votes in Monday’s poll, hinted of possible vote manipulation, casting

doubts on the election’s credibility. ACT claimed the process was not valid and fair, as it allegedly lacked transparency. The group raised the absence of its own representative at the polling center. “I guess in any election, there’s a need to be clear on the process and procedures. If the one who lost is questioning the validity of the election then perhaps they need to revisit [the issue] and make sure there’s no doubt that what they certified is true and correct. The process has to be followed and it has to be transparent so nobody can question it,” insisted Guerrero, who called on House legislators yesterday. The BOE member representing Saipan was also curious over the dismal turnout in Monday’s election.

“When you only have 28 percent [of] eligible voters voting, that’s an extremely low turnout. With this kind of turnout, there’s no clear mandate from the teachers. So it’s questionable. One can raise the question why you don’t have many who voted? There’s a lot of questions why,” he asserted. Gov. Juan N. Babauta proclaimed Bennett’s victory on Tuesday, a day after the Teacher Representative poll was held here Monday and simultaneously on Rota and Tinian. The chief executive stressed that teacher representation in the BOE is constitutionally mandated. He said that concerns raised over the selection has prompted his office to hold the election so that all public school teachers in the CNMI could choose a representative that would truly represent them.

Babauta credited the Public School System, the BOE, the

PSS legal counsel, the Attorney General’s Office and the administration for putting together a fair and objective selection process. Of the 500 full-time teachers who were eligible to vote, Babauta confirmed that only 142 teachers or 28 percent cast their votes. He lamented the minimal participation. According to the breakdown, Yangetmai garnered 62 votes while Bennett gained 78 votes. Two ballots were reportedly cast without votes. Babauta explained that only full time teachers were eligible to vote in this election, quoting PSS’ definition of full time teachers as any person who is employed by the Public School System and has the primary responsibility for the education, instruction or provides related services for one or more students. *(Marian A. Maraya)*

# Paras signs payment schedule with CHC

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

Paras Enterprises president Juan T. Guerrero has signed a payment schedule agreement with the Department of Public Health only last week. Earlier, Paras legal counsel Mark Smith clarified that no agreement had been reached yet as of Jan. 8 as previously agreed by both parties. Guerrero said yesterday that Paras signed the payment schedule only last Jan. 14. On January 16, he said Paras received an additional \$100,000 payment from DPH. Based on the schedule, the department will give another payment of \$80,000 to Paras on Jan. 30 and some \$50,000 on Feb. 13. Guerrero said Paras and DPH continue to negotiate for the \$50,000 billing. “We have submitted our billing for \$50,000. I don’t know why they’re disputing our billing now when in the last six years,

they never did,” said Guerrero. He said Paras submitted \$248,000 billing to DPH as of Jan. 7, 2004. Based on the schedule, the DPH only acknowledged some \$230,000. “There is some flexibility but we’ll still pursue what is really due us,” said Guerrero, adding that the department itself is charging Paras some \$11,000 for outstanding hospital bills. This amount would be assessed against the last payment to Paras. “We’ll settle that but I’m not really sure how much we owe them so we have to discuss that,” he said. Guerrero also clarified that he has not signed any expiration transfer agreement with the department, which would “legalize” the transfer of Paras employees to the Commonwealth Health Center. Some authorities, however, said that a consensual transfer agreement with Paras is no longer needed

since its contracts with employees provide that their termination of employment goes with Paras’ contract termination with CHC. Both parties have agreed to finalize their payment schedule in view of the DPH’ shift to direct hiring of nursing staff effective Jan. 1, 2004. Paras and other agencies’ contracts with CHC ended on Dec. 31, 2003 but transfer negotiations dragged along pending the settlement of the government’s debt with the companies and the lack of funded FTEs or positions at the department. On Jan. 2, Finance released \$100,000 each to Paras and Saipan Employment Agency Services as partial payment. The government terminated its contracts with agencies on the belief that direct hiring would result in better delivery of health care and boost employee morale. The direct hiring aims to implement a uniform pay for all nursing staff.

# DEQ heightens illegal dumping campaign

The Division of Environmental Quality warned that it would impose a fine on anyone caught illegally dumping trash on the islands. DEQ director John I. Castro Jr. urged the public to respect the no littering signs the agency has installed at beach parks and other areas. “We will assess a fine. Our regulations allow us to impose up to \$25,000 per day of violation,” Castro said. The DEQ hopes that the move will deter the public from illegally disposing of trash and household wastes. Castro said trash should be disposed of at the Lower Base

Refuse Transfer Station or the Marpi landfill. “Help us. It’s not just the DEQ’s job to keep Saipan beautiful but it’s also the public’s responsibility,” Castro added. The Environmental Inter-agency Cleanup Operation Team, of which DEQ is a member, and volunteers from non-profit group MOVER recently conducted an emergency cleanup in Garapan’s Makaka beach site, which had deteriorated due to illegal dumping. According to EICOT chairman Benny Pangelinan, people just ignored the DEQ’s no-littering sign at the site. *(John Ravelo)*

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# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

### Get the bugs out of the UN

**H**enry L. Stimson was secretary of State in 1929 when he shut down the State Department's "cipher bureau" with the admonition that "gentlemen do not read each other's mail." But as Franklin Delano Roosevelt's secretary of War more than a decade later, Stimson agreed to the need for spying. It all depends on whom the target is.

Nations large and small always have tried to ferret out each other's secrets. But there is a great difference between pumping an informant and installing listening devices or wiretaps in the office of someone who is not an enemy—U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, for instance.

Last week a former British Cabinet minister, Clare Short, told the BBC that British intelligence agents had secretly intercepted Annan's conversations in his New York offices before the war in Iraq last year. Short said she had seen transcripts of the conversations, though she did not say how they were obtained.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair refused to confirm or deny Short's claim; he contented himself with calling the disclosure "deeply irresponsible."

That comment is as far short of the mark as the reaction of most diplomats at the United Nations and elsewhere: a shrug of the shoulders and a comment that such intrusions are taken for granted. The proper response should be outrage.

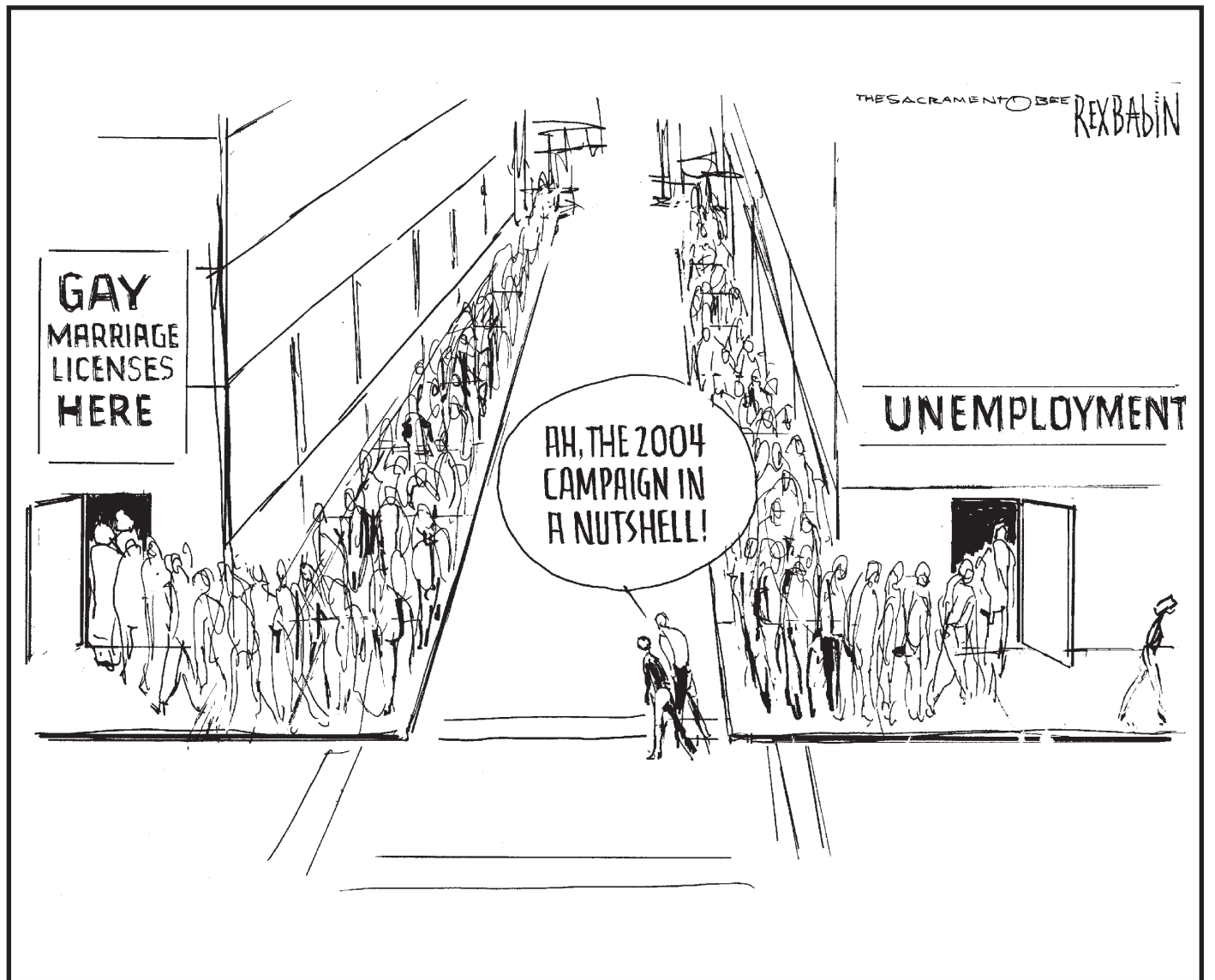
Stephen C. Schlesinger, author of *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations*, said espionage had been an integral part of the U.N. since its founding in 1945. During the Cold War, Soviet and U.S. electronics experts spied on each other's delegations and their foe's allies. The practice apparently continues. The day before Short's interview, Britain ruled against prosecuting whistle-blower Katharine Gun, a former government translator who admitted leaking to Britain's *Observer* newspaper in February 2003 a U.S. request for help in bugging U.N. diplomats.

There is disagreement on whether bugging Annan's office would be legal. But even if the spying broke no laws, Annan's job requires that he be an honest broker between nations. That isn't possible if his conversations are being circulated among intelligence agents and heads of state.

Washington has belatedly and reluctantly realized the importance of the U.N. in Iraq; the foolish bluster about its irrelevance has ended and the U.S. should not try to antagonize the secretary-general. Annan's spokesman, Fred Eckhard, said those who spoke to the secretary-general were "entitled to assume that their exchanges are confidential." Exactly.

Annan did not address the issue publicly. If he feels he can be more effective with a private protest to the British, the soft-spoken career diplomat and Nobel Peace Prize winner should use the strongest language possible.

(c) 2004, Los Angeles Times



## Fix the sloppy Medicare reform

By IRENE M. WIELAWSKI  
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

**A**t the risk of offending advocates for senior citizens, I have to say I'm bewildered by all the trumpeting—and now second-guessing—that has gone into the new Medicare prescription drug law.

First it was hailed as landmark health-reform legislation. Now it's under fire for the price tag, revised upward from \$395 billion to \$534 billion over 10 years. The miscalculation comes at a time when the largest-ever federal deficit looms. Not surprisingly, Congress and the Bush administration, which once jostled for credit, now are pointing accusatory fingers.

Such eye-popping bad math should raise questions. But in the search for answers, I wonder if anyone in Washington will tackle my biggest question since the drive to pass this legislation began four years ago: How can we persist in providing such piecemeal benefits for one age group when costs threaten everyone's health security and our neediest citizens—the medically uninsured—go without?

I don't mean to suggest that impoverished old people don't exist. They do, their circumstances are dire and they should be helped. But this Medicare law benefits everyone over 65, needy or not, creating windfalls for some while squandering an opportunity to reform the health system in a way that benefits all Americans, young and old.

I became aware of the windfall side of this law when my mother showed me a letter from her health plan listing fee reductions worth more than \$800 annually. The letter credited the new law; besides covering prescription drugs, the law boosts subsidies to private companies that offer plans for seniors. As a result, her monthly premium is nearly halved, while co-pays for certain office visits drop from \$20 or \$30 to zero—a bargain my vigorous and financially secure mother doesn't need.

In the meantime, 42 million Americans—one in six people under 65—go without coverage. These patients pay full price not only for medicine but for doctor visits, lab tests, hospitalization, medical equipment and nursing care—expenses most seniors have not had to worry about since Congress created Medicare in 1965. Scores of studies document the deterioration of the uninsured sick as they delay care, endure preventable suffering and die early.

The dichotomy wouldn't be so troubling if the Medicare law actually tackled the systemic problems that price people out of coverage. But the law is disappointingly short on measures to control the underlying drivers of cost, such as technology and the inappropriate use of medical services. A relatively modest proposal to include \$50 million for cost-containment research failed to make it through the appropriations process.

This doesn't make sense, especially with polls showing widespread public anxiety about healthcare costs. The issue of affordable healthcare typically is presented as a problem of insured versus uninsured. In fact, many more people are hurting today. Those insured through their jobs are experiencing ever-larger costs as employers pass on double-digit premium increases. Retirees under 65 are seeing promised health benefits summarily eliminated. Organized-labor disputes increasingly center on health coverage.

Moreover, prospects for improvement are slim, even if the economy rebounds. The latest federal projections show health-related expenditures climbing sharply over the next decade to nearly twice current levels, from a projected \$1.8 trillion, or 15.5 percent of the 2004 gross domestic product, to \$3.4 trillion, or 18.4 percent of GDP, by 2013. The population-wide implications of this cost spiral are hard to miss.

However, the means to safeguard healthcare dollars exists in a growing body of cost and medical-quality research. For example, a new study of arthritis drug use found that seniors with certain kinds of drug coverage were more likely to take expensive drugs when comparable relief could be obtained from cheaper over-the-counter ones. If this insight was built into the Medicare law, might the result be a smaller cost overrun than the projected \$139 billion? And might the broader benefit be improved systemwide discipline regarding drug expenditures?

The price-tag debacle offers a chance for Congress and the administration to fine-tune the Medicare law into a true instrument of reform. By incorporating the latest science on cost, quality and appropriate use, we'd have a better law, one that brings the United States a step closer to affordable healthcare for all.

Wielawski is a healthcare journalist who lives in New York.

# The presidential vote, election 2004, and Proposition 56

Quite often we find ourselves playing the role of ambassador when meeting newcomers to the islands. When suddenly confronted with their ignorance of our U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the newcomers ask the usual questions. "Where are your islands? What money do you use? What postal service do you use? Are you U.S. citizens?"

After giving the standard pat-answers to the first questions, we invariably respond to the last with, "Yes, we are U.S. citizens. However, we have no representation in the U.S. Congress, which taxes us and we don't have the right to vote for president."

Both answers are correct. However the first problem was of our own making, while the other is a tribulation that has been faced and overcome by every other territory of the United States. Unfortunately for us citizens of the modern territories, the second problem will be perpetuated without an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The fact that the CNMI has no representation in the U.S. Congress is a problem of our own creation. However, it can be corrected at our request. Every new territory of the United States, since the creation of the five new territories shortly after the ratification and adoption of the U.S. Constitution, has been guaranteed the right to become a full and equal state of the United States with the same rights and privileges as those promised in the Constitution to the original 13 states.

During the process of creating the Covenant between the United States and the Commonwealth, our delegates to the Covenant negotiations were a bit squeamish about incorporating a Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives into the Covenant. They were more concerned with protecting our negotiated control over labor, immigration and land alienation. They chose instead to have a recognized representative to Washington, D.C., and felt that the Covenant provided a mechanism for mutual negotiation on such points as a Delegate to Congress should a future generation feel that it was necessary.

That need has become abundantly clear over the last few years. Ranking members of the U.S. Congress have repeatedly stated that they will support creating a seat for a Delegate to Congress from the CNMI—when they receive a clear message that it is the will of our people. Unfortunately, we have not been able to send that message clearly enough, and we continue to languish with an expensive and high on useless Office of Washington Representative. As a result, we have neither a voice on the floor of the House of Representatives nor the power of a vote in committee.

A mechanism for sending this message would be a 'yes or no' vote

on the question, to be incorporated on the ballot for the primary election in 2005.

We have no control over our right to vote for president. In fact, even the residents of the 50 states do not really have the right to vote for president. Instead, they vote for a delegate, who is sworn to uphold their vote in the national vote for president.

Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution proved that in the choosing of a president, "each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress . . ."

"The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States . . . The person having the greatest Number of Votes shall be the President; . . ."

In simple talk, voting for president is a "States Right." Voters actually choose among electors committed to support a particular candidate. Each state is allotted one electoral vote for each senator and representative in Congress. This is called the electoral-college system.

For instance, the residents of the large state of Montana do not have the 'right' to vote for president. They do have the right to vote for a number of delegates to the electoral college equal to the total of their two senators and handful of representatives to the House. The much smaller but much more populated State of Massachusetts, however, elects far more delegates and therefore has more say in the choosing of the president. The delegates to the electoral-college then, not the people, vote for president.

Today, there is a popular election for the Office of President. However it is not binding. The difference between the power of the electoral-college and the popular vote became acutely clear after the last presidential election when Florida Gov. Jeff Bush used his father's inherited Nixon-Reagan Republican machine to get the votes that gave his brother, George Junior, the presidency.

The outcome of that election has once again spurred a national movement to amend the U.S. Constitution to have the president chosen by popular vote. Should that happen, then all U.S. citizens, regardless of their place of residence, would have the right to participate in the voting for president—including the residents of the CNMI.

ter, new pollution to Saipan's waters, every day. For the sake of the people who live here—as well as for the sake of the tourists who only visit—action must be taken, sooner rather than later.

□ □ □

On a brighter note, Randy Mendoza, leader of the campaign to bring "legitimacy" to approximately 300 stateless persons, deserves a medal—or the equivalent thereof—for the success of his campaign so far. A hearing by the CNMI House Committee on Federal and Foreign Relations held at the Susupe Multi-Purpose Civic Center earlier this week drew not only a standing-room-only crowd of attendees, but a full panel of seven House members, including the Speaker and the Floor Leader.

However, of five government agencies asked to testify, only Department of Labor Secretary Joaquin A. Tenorio and Acting Secretary of Finance Fermin M. Atalig, showed up—both, in their brief remarks, supporting House Bill 14-97, which would give the stateless persons status as permanent residents of the CNMI. The Attorney General's Office, Office of the Public Auditor, and Department of Commerce, though apparently on the list of witnesses, did not send anyone to the hearing. Presumably, the agencies submitted written comments.

The most moving testimony came from Department of Public Safety Commissioner Edward C. Camacho, who recounted the frustrations he had encountered—prior to the granting of citizenship to the people of the CNMI in 1986—in trying to join the military, and, having finally accomplished that, in fighting for the right to rise above the rank of an enlisted man. He recalled, he said, of being envious of those who did hold U.S. citizenship.

Because of those experiences, he said, he understands and fully supports Mendoza's campaign to achieve recognition for the stateless persons. Camacho told Mendoza that the likely passage of House Bill 14-97 was only the first step, and promised to continue to support Mendoza's efforts until the U.S. Congress granted them all full citizenship.

The hearing was one of the best attended I've seen—both in terms of House members present, and in terms of "audience." Randy Mendoza, together with his team of officers, deserve full credit for the accomplishment.

(The stateless persons were born in the CNMI between January 9, 1978 and November 4, 1986, falling into a crack in the provisions of the Covenant, which denies them U.S. citizenship (though Sam McPhetres, CNMI historian, stated at the hearing that the correct beginning date should be January 1, 1974). They cannot enlist in the U.S. armed forces, are not eligible for federal higher education grants and scholarships, are not eligible for jobs which require U.S. citizenship, are not eligible for

## Island Times

By **DON A. FARRELL**

*Farrell is a Northern Marianas historian.*



Ironically, I doubt many registered voters would take the time away from a Saturday barbecue to go to the polls to vote for president, even if they had the right. The total number of votes cast for president in a CNMI election wouldn't even make a dimple on the tidal wave of votes cast that day. However, it would be a point of satisfaction for the U.S. citizens who call the Commonwealth home. And it would be the first vote cast for president, albeit only a minute ahead of Guam, which, before the creation of the Commonwealth, could brag that it was "Where America's Day Begins." It would probably get us a mention on the "Good Morning America" show every four years, which would be a lot less expensive and give us more exposure than a float in the Rose Bowl Parade!

As I write, political hacks around the world are watching CNN reports on the "Super Tuesday" elections. These are primary elections conducted in several states used to choose their delegates to the electoral college. They are also used for the purposes of local initiatives and certain local elections to prevent them from becoming politicized in the general election. It appears that with these primary elections, Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry will become the National Democratic Party candidate for U.S. president. He is a Vietnam veteran, has served four terms in the U.S. Senate and has demonstrated his ability to run a national campaign for the nation's top job.

On one last note, the ballot for the California State Primary Election held this Tuesday also had a box for Proposition 56. This proposition will make it law for the State Legislature to adopt a budget on time, or the members of the state legislature and the governor would go without pay until a budget was adopted. In the end it did not pass because the language in the initiative was confounded with a section that reduced the number of votes necessary for the legislature to pass new taxes from two thirds to 55 percent. This the people could not live with. Had that language not been inserted, the initiative would have passed. We must remember this when we prepare our initiative for the ballot.

U.S. passports, and thus are not assured re-entry into the CNMI once they leave—for whatever reason.)

□ □ □

Congressman Justo S. Quitugua told of similar struggles he encountered in trying to enroll in the military, trying to go beyond the rank of non-commissioned officer, in his comments at the public hearing. His account, together with that of Commissioner Camacho, offers strong and very direct testimony in regard to the significance of citizenship to the people of the CNMI.

It is strange—to say the least—that none of this is reflected in the non-ceremony that accompanies the annual observance of Citizenship Day in the Commonwealth.

□ □ □

Short takes:

Don't say I didn't tell you so. The CNMI paid former Interior official Danny Aranza \$600,000 to ensure that its Homeland Security plan qualified for federal grants, only to find out that that \$600,000 didn't do what it was supposed to after all—the CNMI having just been informed that the grant application was flawed.

□

Somehow it doesn't seem very friendly, or neighborly, or in accordance with the Pacific Way, to ban Indonesians from entering the CNMI, while so many CNMI residents continue to visit Bali—a part of Indonesia—on a regular basis. Indonesia is one of 30 countries on a list recently issued by the CNMI Attorney General's office from which visitors to the CNMI are now banned.

□

One could say the same about Dr. Jesus D. Camacho's gratuitous criticism of Judge Ken Govendo's defense of the environment in his recent speech to members of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. People who know Govendo respect and appreciate his outspoken honesty, his championship of worthy causes. But not to worry. Camacho isn't commanding much of a readership these days.

□

If only the Legislative Bureau could guarantee that hiring all those extra attorneys for the House and Senate would result in better laws that are better written! One can only hope that the increase in cost is met with funds taken from the legislative budget, rather than those of the executive branch.

□

NASA has just reported evidence that "liquid water" was once present on Mars. What other kind of water is there, pray tell?

*The writer is a librarian by profession, and a longterm resident of the CNMI. To contact her, send email to <ruth.tighe@saipan.com*

## ON MY MIND

By **RUTH L. TIGHE**

As a Tanapag resident, I was thankful to see the sewage problem in our village once again attract public attention, make headlines in both papers, as happened earlier this week. But I am also frustrated. The problem has made headlines, attracted public attention before, but it is still there, still unresolved. Will this time make a difference?

Unfortunately, sewage problems are not unique to Tanapag. All over the western side of the island, there are problems—frequent sewer overflows in the Lower Base area near the Public Works beach, in the Garapan area—both near American Memorial Park, near the Dai Ichi Hotel—reportedly also in Koblerville, San Antonio, Middle Road.

Then there's the outfall in the harbor, which also doesn't work consistently or properly.

According to the report in the papers, CUC claims that it is all a matter of redirecting wastewater flow, which in turn depends on completion of the Airport sewer line project—which is behind schedule—and an upgrade to the Beach Road system—still only in the design stage—and upgrading pump stations, for which it says it has insufficient funding.

But with wastewater control nearly as important as safe drinking water, just waiting for time to pass, for sufficient funds to appear from somewhere in order to get them fixed, is simply not acceptable. Even the imposition of fines by CRM, DEQ and EPA does not seem to have had an effect.

One could, of course, file suit on the grounds that public health is at risk under present circumstances. Or one could hire a consultant—two typical knee-jerk reactions to such problems. But history indicates that neither holds out much hope for effective resolution, or for cost-effectiveness. More apt to bring resolution would be to give the wastewater problems to a local task force or, perhaps, to assign them to the already established Water Task Force. Not to be facetious but what comes in must go out, and the Water Task Force might just as well work on both bringing water to, and removing water from, our homes and businesses.

The overflows, the lagoon outfall, add new threats to groundwa-

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# 3 men arrested for alleged assault

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO  
REPORTER

Authorities arrested Monday night three men who have been a subject of intensive investigations by law enforcers since November 2003 when a 43-year-old man lodged a complaint against them.

Police department spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas Jr. said Martin F. Borja, 38; Chris W. Taimanglo, 20; and William M. Faisao, 19, were arrested based on the arrest warrants issued against them by Judge Juan Lizama.

Blas said COPPS officers Jesse Seman and Sandy Hambros arrested the three suspects in connection with a Nov. 16, 2003, assault case lodged by Saburo Stewart, 43.

Lizama issued the warrants after the police released the results of its investigation on the case. The officers immediately served the warrants to the suspects. All three were brought to the Adult Correctional facility in Susupe where they were booked and detained pending bail hearing.

The investigation report showed that the police department received a call for assistance around 1:28am of Nov. 16, 2003, due to a disturbance in the house of Stewart in Kagman III area. Medics were also dispatched due to injuries sustained by the victim.

According to the report, the victim and two of the three suspects were involved in a fight outside the victim's house. During the squabble, the suspects used rocks, a machete, and a baseball bat to allegedly attack the victim, causing serious injuries.

Stewart reportedly sustained lacerations on the back, legs, and arms, as well as other cuts and bruises on his body.

After the investigation, probers determined the culpability of the three suspects and asked that arrest warrants be issued against them.

The suspects are now facing disturbing the peace, assault and battery, assault with dangerous weapons, and criminal mischief charges.

# Taiwanese boat seized off New Caledonia

A Taiwanese fishing boat has been intercepted south of New Caledonia for fishing illegally.

The French high commission in the New Caledonia capitol of Noumea says the ship had been spotted by a French surveillance aircraft and an inspection showed it carried dozens of tons of fresh and frozen fish.

The interception comes just days after the captain of another Taiwanese fishing boat was jailed for six months and fined almost US\$200,000 for fishing illegally. (RNZI/PIR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION

Saipan Southern High School students gather around Gov. Juan N. Babauta during the chief executive's recent visit at the campus, in line with the administration's education program. Babauta has been putting emphasis on public education as an important tool in the eventual recovery of the local economy.

# MPLA board in limbo due to lack of quorum

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

The lack of a quorum on the Board of Directors of the Marianas Public Lands Authority is stymieing efforts to move ahead on critical projects, including 36 new offers for land compensation that require the board's approval.

Only two members remain on the Board—chairperson, Ana Demapan-Castro and vice chairman Manny Villagomez—following the resignation of a member and term expiration of another.

Member Pedro M. Atalig resigned from the board effective Jan. 1, 2004, while member

Pedro Igitol's term expired on Dec. 31, 2003.

The board is composed of five seats, with one representative each from Tinian and Rota and three from Saipan. The CNMI Constitution also provides that one of the directors should be of Carolinian descent, while another should represent women.

At the moment, Demapan-Castro represents Saipan and the women's sector, while Villagomez represents Tinian. This means nobody is representing Rota, the Carolinians, and two seats for Saipan.

This, even as the MPLA has already readied 36 new offers for land compensation that re-

quire the board's approval.

"We have to get the board's approval before we can make the offer but the board can't possibly meet right now for lack of quorum," said MPLA commissioner Henry S. Hofschneider.

The board normally holds a regular meeting on the third Thursday of the month.

Hofschneider said that some names have been floated for appointment by the governor to the board. He declined to identify them.

Meantime, he said that 38 landowners have accepted the MPLA's initial offers and are like likely to get their compensation within the month.

"Once Finance puts the

money in MPLA's special account, we can start cutting checks," he said.

Hofschneider said that MPLA is offering "just and fair" compensation to landowners.

The MPLA board approved 75 folders for immediate land compensation last month. This came soon after the CNMI government floated a \$40-million bond, with the proceeds to be used primarily to settle the longstanding land claims by individuals against the government. The first batch of claims included acquisition of rights-of-way.

The Land Compensation Act mandates the government to prioritize the payment for lands used for rights-of-way,

then ponding basins, and later wetlands and other claims.

The payment to landowners is based on the valuation at the time of taking by the Commonwealth.

The MPLA has listed some 120 eligible land claimants in the CNMI.

Of the \$40-million bond, only about \$27 million will be used for land compensation, as \$11 million has been allotted to fund a pending prison project. The bond's Hawaii-based underwriter also deducted \$1.5 million from the total amount for cost of the bond issuance.

The government is given 30 years to pay off the loan at an annual interest of 6.75 percent.

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# Good Housekeeping

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# Business

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# World

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## Dollars & Sense

# Stewart conviction likely to hurt firm

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO  
AP BUSINESS WRITER

**NEW YORK (AP)**—The guilty verdict for Martha Stewart will badly damage her company, scaring more advertisers and perhaps readers and viewers away from her media business, industry experts said. Sales of her towels and other household goods may hold up better.

Within an hour of the verdict, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Inc. issued a statement saying the board would meet promptly to carefully "evaluate the situation and take actions as appropriate."

"In the meantime, we are confident that our assets ... are more than sufficient to continue MSO's development as a leading 'how to' brand building company," it said.

Stewart said in a statement on her Web site that she would appeal and

"continue to fight to clear my name."

Observers, however, believe that with the name and face of the company tarnished by a conviction, it will be difficult to sustain the brand—especially with competition that has intensified since Stewart's legal woes began 22 months ago.

The Martha Stewart brand, associated with gracious living, has been stamped on magazines, TV shows and household products, and analysts say that without her image of perfection it has lost its distinctive edge.

"This is a terrible tragedy for a great brand," said Seth Siegel, co-founder of The Beanstalk Group, a trademark licensing agency.

Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, which has been adding new magazines and TV shows without Stewart's name over the past year—"Petkeeping with Marc Morrone" and "Everyday

Food"—will have to keep developing other brands or personalities, he said.

"The company can still survive because it has phenomenal infrastructure," Siegel said, but added that it could take years for many advertisers to come back to its flagship magazine Martha Stewart Living and other namesake publications.

Regardless of the trial's outcome, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia "has to rebuild itself" because of its dramatic declines in ad revenue, said T.K. MacKay, an analyst at Morningstar.

"The Martha Stewart brand is damaged, and they have to figure out ways to distance themselves, or convince advertisers to come back, or both," he said.

The good news, analysts said, is that Martha Stewart Living has \$170 million in cash on hand—enough to withstand several more quarters of declining ad revenue.



Martha Stewart leaves Manhattan federal court in New York Friday, March 5, 2004, flanked by her bodyguard Frank Senerchia, left, and her lawyer Robert Morvillo, right.

## Job growth weak with 21,000 Feb. hires

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—The nation's payrolls grew by just 21,000 in February and left the unemployment rate stuck at 5.6 percent, just as President Bush revved up a re-election campaign that is counting heavily on a revived economy.

The frustrating news for out-of-work Americans, contained in a jobs snapshot released Friday by the Labor Department, showed a continuation of the slow employment growth the country has been enduring. The net gain in "nonfarm" payrolls—government and private employers—fell well short of the 125,000 jobs that economists had been forecasting.

### Temp jobs rise, permanent ones lagging

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Conventional wisdom says that once companies begin hiring temporary workers, a turnaround in the overall job market must be close behind.

But nearly 2 1/2 years after the economy officially began its recovery, old assumptions about new jobs are providing more confusion than comfort.

A report released by the government Friday showed temporary employment increased once again in February—by 32,000 jobs—just as it has been doing for the better part of a year.

But the permanent hiring that was supposed to flow from the temp jobs is still not materializing. The economy as a whole added a scant 21,000 jobs last month, far below the 125,000 that analysts had forecast. That has economists, and even temporary staffing businesses, scratching their heads.

"We extrapolated based on the old model—your father's economic recovery: 'Oh, this is a signal that

(businesses) are going to hire permanently,'" said John Silvia, chief economist with Wachovia Corp. "We didn't realize that this isn't your father's economic recovery. It's not like the old days."

If this isn't your father's recovery, though, then what is it? And what to make of the strong evidence—including a sustained slowdown in layoffs, and the upturn in temp positions—that the job market is improving?

For companies that provide employers with temporary workers, the past year has seen business pick up dramatically, with employment swelling nearly 10 percent, said Steve Berchem, vice president of the American Staffing Association.

The figures kept by the government vary slightly from the industry's, but show an almost identical rise. Since April 2003, temporary employment has increased by about 215,000 to 2.37 million, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The little growth there was came from the government. Private-sector employment was flat.

"This remains a jobless recovery, pure and simple," said David Rosenberg, chief economist at Merrill Lynch. "Meaningful job creation remains alarmingly elusive."

The report also showed that job creation in December and January was weaker than previously thought. Total payrolls in December grew by just 8,000 and were up by 97,000 in January, according to revised figures.

"People are having difficulty finding a job because companies are still very cautious in taking on new employees," said Lynn Reaser, chief economist at Banc of America Capital Management. "The hiring doors aren't fully opened."

The overall seasonally adjusted civilian unemployment rate stayed at 5.6 percent in February as 392,000 people left the civilian work force for any number of reasons.

The health of the nation's economy, especially the job climate, is a major issue in this year's presidential race.

The economy has lost 2.2 million jobs since Bush took office in January 2001.

The weak job creation, however, comes even as the economy has been growing at a healthy rate. Productivity gains have allowed companies to produce more with fewer people, economists explained.

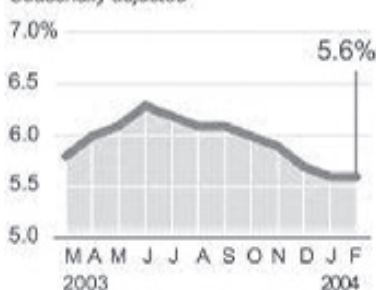
The economy, after struggling mightily to get back on its feet following the jolt of the 2001 recession and terrorist attacks, finally staged a material rebound in the second half of last year. But for out-of-work Americans, it hasn't felt like better economic times.

There were some 8.2 million people unemployed in February, with the average duration of 20.3 weeks without work. That marked the highest average duration of joblessness in over 20 years.

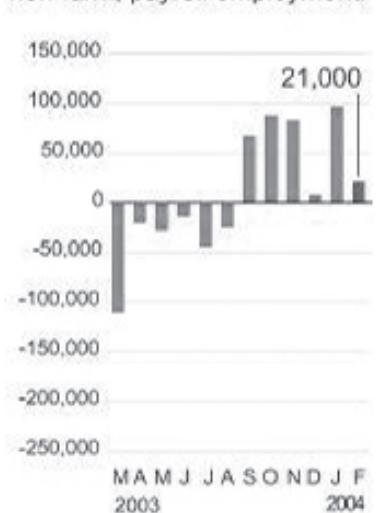
### Unemployment

Here is a look at the unemployment rate for the past year.

Seasonally adjusted



Here is a look at the change in non-farm, payroll employment.



SOURCE: Department of Labor AP

## Dow climbs nearly 8; Nasdaq declines 7

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Disappointing job growth figures left stocks mixed after a volatile session Friday, with investors guessing whether the underlying economy was strong enough to warrant current share prices. But perhaps the biggest news of the day was Martha Stewart.

After the founder of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Inc. was found guilty, the company's stock plunged \$3.17, or 23 percent, to close at \$10.86, the biggest percentage loser on the New York Stock Exchange for the session. Shares had skyrocketed \$2.24, or 16 percent, at \$16.27 in the hour before Stewart's guilty verdict was announced. Trading was halted for a half hour afterward.

The Dow Jones industrial average advanced 7.55, or 0.1 percent, to 10,595.55.

Broader stock indicators were narrowly mixed. The Standard &

Poor's 500 index gained 1.99, or 0.2 percent, at 1,156.87, and the Nasdaq composite index was down 7.48, or 0.4 percent, at 2,047.63.

Despite the day's volatility, the markets ended the week with small gains, continuing a lackluster trend that has stalled Wall Street's 11-month rally. For the week, the Dow gained 0.1 percent, the S&P 500 rose 1.0 percent and the Nasdaq was up 0.9 percent. It was the second straight week of gains for the S&P, while the Dow and Nasdaq reversed last week's downward trend.

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 9-to-5 ratio on the New York Stock Exchange, where consolidated volume came to 1.81 billion shares, compared to 1.61 billion on Thursday.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies rose 1.16, or 0.2 percent, to 599.54.

## McDonald's monthly sales gain 23 percent

**OAK BROOK, ILL. (AP)**—McDonald's Corp.'s sales jumped a whopping 22.6 percent in February over last year's numbers, the fast-food chain said Friday, extending a recovery that began last spring and sending its stock to a nearly two-year high.

Comparable sales from McDonald's-brand restaurants worldwide, reflecting results from outlets open more than a year, were a better-than-expected 13.9 percent in a key measure of the strength of McDonald's comeback.

The hamburger giant's 13,000-plus U.S. restaurants had the best showing,

with comparable sales up 20 percent. Europe, where the recovery has been slower to take hold, posted a solid 7.7-percent increase.

Analysts and the company credited a combination of factors for the especially large U.S. gain: new products introduced since February 2003, less discounting, additional hours, the weak dollar and an extra day because of leap year.

McDonald's chairman and CEO Jim Cantalupo said that while some of the reasons for the impressive increase were unique, they show that the company's strategy is paying off.

# United States

# Around the Globe

## Shiites won't sign interim constitution

By HAMZA HENDAWI  
AP WRITER

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** (AP)—Shiite leaders refused to sign an interim constitution after Iraq's top Shiite cleric rejected portions of the charter, in a last-minute dispute that wrecked a planned signing ceremony Friday and marred a landmark in the U.S. plans to hand over sovereignty to the Iraqis.

A spokesman for one of the Shiite parties said no signing would take place before Monday, giving time for members to consult with Shiite Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani—who has already forced two major revisions in U.S. plans to transfer power to the Iraqis.

The maneuver by five Shiite members of the Iraqi Governing Council—including the current council president and the Pentagon-backed Ahmad Chalabi—broke the unity that the body showed earlier this week when it overcame deep differences to unanimously agree on a draft of the charter.

### *'Russia helped Iraq with missiles'*

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Weapons-hunters in Iraq have found evidence that experts from Russia and other countries helped with Iraq's missile programs, but it is unclear whether those countries' governments played any role, U.S. officials said Friday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the Bush administration will compile information it has obtained and eventually present it to those countries. In addition to Russia, officials found signs that experts from Ukraine, Serbia and

Belarus may have been involved.

It may be that the alleged assistance came from companies or individuals who came to Iraq without the knowledge or sanction of their home governments, the officials said.

Still, any such assistance would violate the prewar U.N. sanctions that prohibited foreign weapons aid to deposed President Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the officials said. They provided no details on what was discovered or the nature of the technical help.

The information found in Iraq was first reported Friday in The New York Times.

Of all the prewar intelligence assessments regarding Iraq's illicit weapons programs, so far the predictions regarding long-range missile efforts have found the most validation.

"Since the war we have found an aggressive Iraqi missile program concealed from the international community," CIA Director George J. Tenet said in a speech last month.

It also highlighted the power that al-Sistani wields over the political process because of his considerable influence over Iraq's Shiite majority.

A statement distributed early Saturday by the Governing Council said the members would reconvene Monday "to finalize" outstanding issues "and

sign" the interim charter. However, it was unclear whether the final hurdles could be overcome according to the statement's timetable.

Along with top U.S. administrator L. Paul Bremer, council members negotiated in private in an attempt to resolve the Shiite objections. But seven hours

after the ceremony had been set to take place, a coalition spokesman said no deal was reached Friday and gave no date for the signing to take place.

The council's squabbles squandered an enormous public relations and security effort for the ceremony, a stinging embarrassment for the U.S.-led oc-

cupation authority and its hand-picked Governing Council. Earlier, Bremer had appeared on morning television shows in the United States, touting the constitution on CNN's "American Morning" as "an extraordinary document, which is really unprecedented in Iraq's history."

The Shiite objections focused on two clauses in the document: one that effectively gives the Kurds a veto over a permanent constitution due to be put to a referendum next year and another on the shape of the presidency in a future government, said Hamed al-Bayati, a senior official in one of the Shiite parties that balked at signing.

But by the end of the evening, the dispute seemed to have become broader. Entifadh Qanbar, a spokesman for the Iraqi National Congress, one of the parties that balked at signing, said members had to deal with the issue of how "an unelected body can bind an elected body in the future." He did not elaborate.



### DERAILED

Railway workers work to reopen derailed express train after the heavy snow storm in Daejeon, 160 km south of Seoul. The largest snow fall on record for a single day in March affected the whole country Friday, especially the central region.

AP

## China boosts military spending 11.6 percent

**BEIJING** (AP)—China on Saturday unveiled an 11.6 percent increase in its military budget for 2004 even as it announced heavy new spending on its highest-priority domestic issue—improving life for millions in its vast, poor countryside.

The budget increase for the world's largest military came amid tensions with rival Taiwan and, despite official promises to focus on fighting rural poverty and improving public health, was even bigger than last year's.

Overall, the government plans to increase spending by 7 percent over last year's levels, the finance minister.

Amid mounting alarm over growing deficits and China's government debt, he said this year's budget shortfall would hold steady at the 2003 level.

The planned military budget represents a bigger increase than last year in an age when the People's Liberation Army is racing to make itself competitive and adapt to a high-tech world.

The figures came in a budget report prepared for delivery by Finance Minister Jin Renqing at the National People's Congress, the country's nominal legislature.

Jin didn't give a total for military spending, but said outlays this year

would increase by \$2.6 billion. Last year's announced figure was \$22.4 billion, though the actual figure is believed higher.

This year's increase was allotted "in order to improve the defensive combat readiness of the armed forces under high-tech conditions and to raise the salaries of army personnel and the pensions for ex-servicemen," Jin's remarks said.

The announcement puts China back into double-digit defense increases—a pattern it had adhered to for 13 straight years until last year's 9.6 percent increase.



### Thousands protest against Nepal king

**KATMANDU, Nepal** (AP)—About 10,000 demonstrators marched through the streets of the Nepalese capital Friday, the latest protest against the king for dismissing an elected government and replacing it with one loyal to the monarchy.

The protesters, who remained peaceful as hundreds of riot police kept watch, also want immediate parliamentary elections. Similar marches have ended in violent clashes between police and the demonstrators.

Nepal has been hit by political turbulence since King Gyanendra fired Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba in October 2002, accusing him of incompetence and failing to control an insurgency.

The rebels, who claim to be inspired by Chinese revolutionary leader Mao Zedong, have been fighting since 1996 for a communist state. More than 8,500 people have been killed.

The king has ignored the protesters demands.

### Nigeria denies nuclear ambitions

**LAGOS, Nigeria** (AP)—The Nigerian government denied Friday that it ever sought atomic weapons, distancing itself from earlier statements that suggested its military wanted to develop nuclear capability.

Friday's denial, coupled with the other claims, left experts unsure if the African powerhouse was trying to mask its nuclear ambitions, or if it was guilty only of government bungling.

The Nigerian vice president's office said five weeks ago that a visiting North Korean delegation had offered the country missile technology. On Wednesday, the Defense Ministry

cited a top Pakistani official as saying Pakistan was trying to decide how to help the Nigerian military "strengthen its military capability and to acquire nuclear power."

### Arson suspected in France mosque fire

**ANNECY, France** (AP)—Fire damaged a mosque and destroyed a Muslim prayer hall before dawn Friday in southeastern France, and police suspect arson in both.

Fire crews extinguished the fire at the mosque in Annecy before it engulfed the entire building. The prayer hall in the Annecy suburb of Seynod was destroyed in the other fire.

Police suspect the fires were started deliberately. There were no immediate claims of responsibility.

The fires were condemned as "racist aggression" by the French Council of the Muslim Faith, a body set up at the government's urging to represent France's estimated 5 million Muslims.

### US general says al-Qaida eyeing Africa

**STUTTGART, Germany** (AP)—Squeezed out of sanctuaries elsewhere in the world, al-Qaida may be looking to the deserts and jungles of Africa as a haven where terrorists could train recruits and plan new attacks, the deputy head of U.S. forces in Europe said Friday.

Key among U.S. military proposals to fight back is deploying American units of about 200 soldiers to train armies throughout the continent, patrol alongside them, or hunt terrorists on short notice if necessary.

Mauritania and Nigeria are among West African nations alleged by some Western think tanks to have al-Qaida cells and top al-Qaida figures came from Mauritania.

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# Life & Style

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# Gibson's firm sues over alleged piracy



Jarrett Merz, who plays Simon of Cyrene, right, helps Jim Caviezel, portraying Jesus Christ, carry a cross on the set of "The Passion of the Christ" in this Jan. 24, 2003 photo.

AP

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Mel Gibson's film distribution company is suing a Hollywood post-production facility where three former employees allegedly made pre-release copies of "The Passion of the Christ."

Icon Distribution, Inc. alleges in the lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court here on Thursday that Lightning Media was responsible for the actions of its employees. Icon seeks more than \$150,000 dollars in damages and an order barring

Lightning and its workers from copying or distributing the film.

Three former employees of the Los Angeles-based post-production facility were charged Feb. 11 with misdemeanor counts of conspiring to violate federal copyright laws. Authorities said they copied the film for personal use and for friends, and not for profit. They each face a maximum of a year in jail if convicted.

U.S. attorney's spokesman Thom Mrozek said Friday that

there is no evidence suggesting Lightning Media was aware of any illegal copying at its facilities.

Lightning Media said it had not yet been notified about the Icon lawsuit, but Chief Executive Officer Stephen Buchbaum said the company had cooperated fully with the federal investigators.

"When the FBI determined it may have been one or more employees from Lightning, we opened up the doors to them," he said.

The California residents charged in the case are Frank Pelayo Jr., 23, of Burbank; Richard Young, 42, of Northridge; and Victor Ochoa, 31, of Reseda.

Authorities said they were arrested after the FBI traced a three-minute segment of "Passion" that they had found on the Internet, as well as a complete tape of the film that had been obtained by the New York Post, to the men's former employer, Lightning Dubbs. The company is now known as Lightning Media.

## Jackson says halftime show was accident

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Echoing her on-stage partner, Janet Jackson says her breast exposure during the Super Bowl halftime show was a "costume accident."

"It was not intentional. It was a costume accident," Jackson tells Ebony magazine for its April issue in her first interview since the now-infamous Feb. 1 performance.

"It was an accident," she says. "That was basically it."

Timberlake has said that when he reached for Jackson's top, exposing her right breast covered only in a sun-shaped nipple shield, it was a "wardrobe malfunction."

In the article, Jackson also discusses her boyfriend of the past year and a half, record producer Jermaine Dupri, about whom she's been reticent in the past.

"Things are great with us," the 37-year-old singer says. "I'm sorry, but I get so tickled when you say his name. It's so funny because I've never been in a relationship when my friends adore him and my family just loves him. It's a first me for me."

"But more importantly," she added, "I love him. Everything is great."

Jackson is headed back to network television on April 10 as the host and musical guest of "Saturday Night Live," NBC announced.

## Man says Streisand won't pay legal bills

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—A man sued by singer Barbra Streisand for posting photos of her Malibu mansion on the Internet claims she is refusing to pay his \$220,000 legal bill after he won the case.

A judge in December dismissed Streisand's \$10 million invasion of privacy suit against retired software entrepreneur Kenneth Adelman, his Internet service provider and a photo agency that distributes his work.

The singer was ordered to pay his legal fees and costs.

Adelman filed papers Thursday in Superior Court seeking another court order that Streisand

pay an estimated \$204,000 in legal fees from the original case, along with \$15,000 in fees spent to enforce the first order.

A call seeking comment from Streisand's lawyer, John M. Gatti, was not immediately returned.

Streisand sued Adelman in May for putting two aerial photos of her cliffside estate on a Web site devoted to photographs of the California coastline. She claimed Adelman potentially contributed to a problem with stalkers.

Adelman said he posted the photos—taken from his private helicopter—for scientific research on the coastline. He

has posted more than 12,000 photos on his California Coastal Records Project Web site.

Superior Court Judge Allan Goodman ruled that while Streisand has taken steps to dissuade unwanted visitors, she also granted reporters interviews in her home and permitted magazines to publish photos of the interior of the home and its adjoining grounds.

"Occasional overflights are among those ordinary incidents of community life of which (Streisand) is part," Goodman wrote. "The taking of photographs in picturesque, coastal areas is a similarly routine activity."

## Opera singer Graves is 5 months pregnant

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Opera singer Denyce Graves, who is five months' pregnant, doesn't know the sex of her unborn baby—and she's happy to be in the dark.

"Isn't it great?" Graves said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "I just thank God for whatever it is."

People don't need to know everything, she said.

"First of all, we had the big letdown with no Santa Claus ... no Easter Bunny. ... How many surprises are there left in life? Why can't you just wait?"

Keeping her performance schedule while pregnant hasn't been easy, Graves said.

"Traveling around is not ideal for pregnancy, that's for sure, but I'm managing it," she said. "Vocally, it's difficult. It's difficult finding the support, it's



Graves

difficult finding your breath. It's changed my voice a lot. It's gotten higher."

Graves, best known for her sensuous performances in the title roles of the operas "Carmen" and "Samson and Delila," is starring in her own TV spe-

cial, "Breaking the Rules," that will air on PBS stations around the country this month.

The mezzo-soprano says the special shows she can perform songs outside the opera realm where she is best known. "I'm an opera singer, and that is what I am, but it's also saying, I do other things, I enjoy other things besides that."

Her upcoming projects include an opera based on Toni Morrison's "Beloved," which Graves says is being written just for her. But she plans to take a break from performing right before her child is born, and will take a few weeks off after the baby's birth before performing again.

"By mid-May, I'll be just quiet, and I'll learn how to knit or something," she said.

## Grandmother playing favorites undermines girl's self-esteem

By AVIGAIL VAN BUREN

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband, "Todd," and I have been happily married for four years and together for six. We have a daughter (mine from a former marriage) and a beautiful little boy together. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Todd loves both children equally. Despite some tough financial times over the past two years, we are a happy family.



*Dear Abby*

Our problem? Todd's mother. She's a negative, bitter woman who insists she "can't possibly" show our daughter the same love she shows our son. She sends affectionate notes to our son, none to our daughter. She shops at discount stores for our daughter and only the best shops for our son. She sent our son a beautiful handmade toy and our daughter a pencil—yes, a pencil!

Please understand this isn't about gifts or the amount she spends. It's about the obvious disparity. Even worse, she's always saying that Todd couldn't possibly love our daughter the way he does our son. Need I tell you the damage this has already done to our daughter?

We are at our wit's end. Todd is ready to just walk away from his mother. I know we can't change the way she feels, but are we wrong to insist that she not show it so openly to our daughter? Help. Please.

READY TO WALK AWAY

**DEAR READY:** You are not wrong. What you have described is emotional abuse on the part of your mother-in-law. Her blatant favoritism is heartless, deliberate and harmful to your children's relationship with each other—not to mention damaging your daughter's self-esteem. If she fails to comply, you are also justified in limiting or restricting her contact with them.

**DEAR ABBY:** My mother passed away two years ago and I still have many of her things. I'm afraid that she'll think I don't love her or respect her belongings if I don't keep everything.

My question is, do you think she'll understand that I don't have a lot of space in my house? Do you have any ideas about where I could put her things? Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions.

WITHOUT MOM IN WASHINGTON

**DEAR WITHOUT:** Your mother left her things to you because she wanted you to enjoy them. Of course she would understand if you cannot use them all. She didn't intend for them to be a burden but a blessing.

Since there are more things than you need or want, please consider sharing the rest with other relatives who can appreciate their sentimental value. If that's not possible, donate them to a charity—possibly one that raises money to fight the disease that took her. I can't think of a more worthwhile use for them than that.

**DEAR ABBY:** My long-divorced father was befriended by a well-to-do family from another country that has lived in the United States for a few years. They invited him to accompany them on a four-week visit to their country. While there, they talked him into marrying (on paper only) one of their sisters so that her child could get a U.S. visa.

The child has now arrived in the U.S. My father thinks he did a wonderful thing. I think he was used. What do you think?

CONCERNED IN MINNESOTA

**DEAR CONCERNED:** I think your father committed immigration fraud. Please consult an immigration attorney on his behalf immediately. What I think is less important than what the INS will think if they get wind of his "good deed."

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)



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# Super Bowl champ Pats lose another starter

By **DAVE GOLDBERG**  
AP FOOTBALL WRITER



The Super Bowl champion New England Patriots lost another starter Friday when Damien Woody, one of the most sought-after free-agent offensive linemen, agreed to join the Detroit Lions.

Woody was the second defector to leave Foxboro as a free agent—nose tackle Ted Washington went to Oakland on Wednesday, the opening day of the signing period. Woody and former Buffalo cornerback Antoine Winfield, who signed with Minnesota after backing out of an agreement with the New York Jets, were the two major signings Friday.

“I want to keep winning, keep being successful,” Woody said as he was introduced in Detroit.

Still, the signing isn’t likely to change New England’s philosophy which, in the words of owner Robert Kraft, is “to upgrade the bottom of your portfolio” as well as the top. Woody, New England’s starting left guard, missed both the AFC title game and the Super Bowl with a knee injury and last week, New England re-signed guard Russ Hochstein, who filled in adequately for him.

Woody’s acquisition was the second in 12 hours for the Lions, who Thursday night acquired Jacksonville cornerback Fernando Bryant. But Detroit is in a different position than New England: trying to upgrade its roster after going 10-38 the past three seasons.

There also was one trade, Ten-

nessee sending wide receiver Justin McCareins to the New York Jets for a second-round draft pick.

But overall it was quieter Friday than in the first two days of free agency, primarily because Washington finally slowed down after spending nearly \$50 million of Daniel Snyder’s money in bonuses alone.

The Redskins were ecstatic about the players they picked up, although big spending hasn’t worked for Snyder in the past and there are questions about several of their acquisitions: aging quarterback Mark Brunell, underachieving defensive tackle Cornelius Griffin and injury-prone cornerback Shawn Springs.

Their last acquisition, former Indianapolis linebacker Marcus Washington, got a \$7 million signing bonus.

He replaces Jessie Armstead, who was released last week. Armstead agreed to terms Friday with Carolina and coach John Fox, who was the defensive coordinator for the New York Giants when the 33-year-old linebacker was in his prime in the late ‘90s.

“He could have signed elsewhere for more money and there were quite a few offers, but he has a strong relationship with coach Fox and is comfortable playing for him,” said Armstead’s agent, Jason Rosenhaus.

Winfield, who spent his first five seasons in Buffalo, got a six-year deal for \$35 million from the Vikings with a \$10.8 million signing bonus. He had tentatively agree to sign with the Jets Thursday night for \$30 million with a \$10 million bonus.



In other developments Friday:

□ The NFL released a final list of underclassmen who have applied for the April 24 draft following the ruling that made Maurice Clarett eligible. It included six high school players and one from junior college, but NFL officials said only Clarett and Southern California wide receiver Mike Williams are expected to be drafted.

□ Miami acquired guard Jeno James, who started last season for NFC champion Carolina.

□ San Francisco re-signed cornerback Ahmad Plummer but lost cornerback Jason Webster, who signed with Atlanta.

□ Quarterback Jeff Garcia, one of several offensive players released by San Francisco, visited Cleveland.

□ Center-guard Mike Goff, who spent six years with Cincinnati, agreed to terms with San Diego.

□ The Kansas City Chiefs agreed to a six-year contract with defensive end Eric Hicks, the team’s leading tackler in 2003.

□ Tampa Bay signed lineman Matt Stinchcomb to a two-year contract that reunites him with Jon Gruden, his coach in Oakland.

Marcus Washington, right, shows his Washington Redskins jersey after being introduced by Redskins coach Joe Gibbs, left, Friday, March 5, 2004 in Ashburn, Va. The Redskins added Washington to their free agent haul Friday, signing the linebacker to a six-year, \$24 million contract including a \$7 million signing bonus.

AP

## Owens wants to play for Eagles

By **ROB MAADDI**  
AP SPORTS WRITER

**PHILADELPHIA** (AP)—Terrell Owens wants to play for the Philadelphia Eagles, not the Baltimore Ravens.

One day after the San Francisco 49ers traded the four-time Pro Bowl receiver to Baltimore, Owens said he’s not happy with the deal and plans to file a grievance regarding the situation.

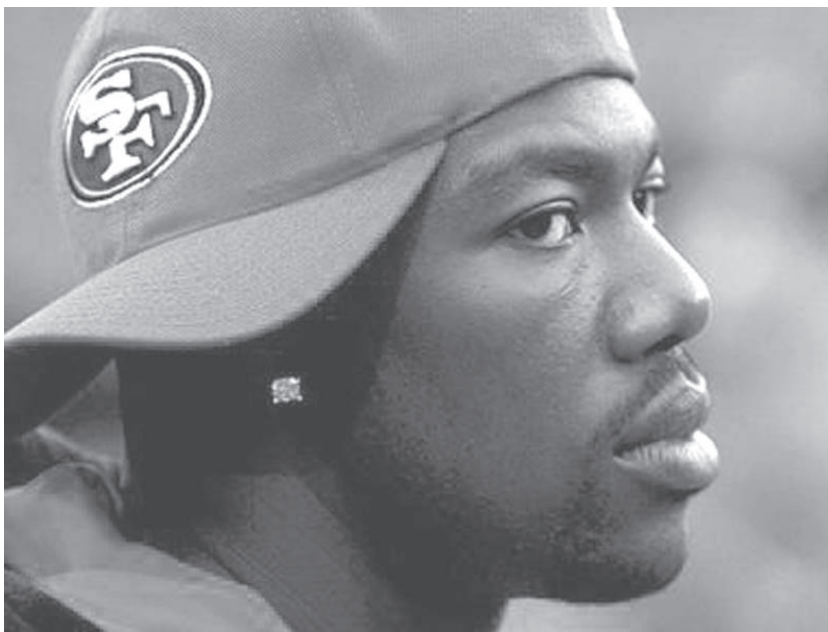
“This is about me getting a fair shot at a team that I want to go to. Baltimore is definitely one of my choices, but Philly was my ‘A’ choice, my priority on my list,” Owens said in an interview on ESPN late Friday night. “I talked to my agent earlier and we’re going to file a grievance for the situation and we’re going to hope for the best possible situation.”

The Eagles, desperate for a No. 1 receiver, reportedly agreed to a contract with Owens that included a signing bonus believed to be worth about \$10 million. But the volatile receiver was traded to the Ravens on Thursday before Philadelphia could work out a trade with San Francisco.

The Eagles wouldn’t comment Friday. Owens’ agent, David Joseph, didn’t return phone calls from The Associated Press.

Owens failed to become a free agent this week when he missed a deadline last month to void the final three seasons of his contract. Joseph already filed a grievance to resolve that matter.

“We’re not idiots,” Owens said. “This is something we’ve been waiting on. The 49ers have known that I was more than possibly going to void



AP

San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Terrell Owens watches the game during the second quarter against the Arizona Cardinals on Saturday, Dec. 21, 2002, at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe, Ariz.

my contract. There’s been a lot of backstabbing going on the last couple of years.”

The Ravens sent a second-round pick to the 49ers for Owens.

Owens caught 80 passes for 1,102 yards and nine touchdowns last season — his lowest totals since 1999. He has been selected to the last four Pro Bowls while feuding with teammates, coaches, the 49ers’ front office and the media.

Owens is due to make \$17.7 million in base salary over the next three seasons, including \$5.3 million next year—a relative bargain for one of the NFL’s best receivers.

The Eagles had perhaps the league’s worst starting receivers, James Thrash and Todd Pinkston. The duo combined for just 85 catches and three TDs last season. In Philadelphia’s 14-3 loss to Carolina in the NFC championship game, Thrash had one catch and Pinkston had none.

The Eagles, who have lost the conference title game the last three years, upgraded their defense by signing three-time Pro Bowl defensive end Jevon Kearse to a \$66 million, eight-year deal. But they still need a top target for Donovan McNabb, who has openly campaigned for the team to acquire Owens.

## No. 20 Georgia dodges Florida 76-72 in SEC

By **ELIZABETH A. DAVIS**  
AP SPORTS WRITER



**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** (AP)—Sherill Baker scored 18 points and Cori Chambers added 15, helping No. 20 Georgia rally to beat Florida 76-72 Friday night in the quarterfinals of the Southeastern Conference tournament.

Christi Thomas and Ebony Felder added 13 points each for the fifth-seeded Lady Bulldogs (21-8), who lost twice in the regular-season to Florida for the first time ever. Georgia advanced to play top-ranked Tennessee in the semifinals on Saturday.

Florida (18-10) grabbed the lead in the early minutes of the second half but couldn’t extend it past seven points. The Lady Bulldogs kept chipping away at the lead.

They cut it to a point on a three-point play by Thomas and a basket by Chambers with 6:47 left. Florida scored again, but Chambers hit consecutive 3-pointers to put Georgia ahead for good at 67-64 with 4:10 to go.

The Lady Bulldogs stretched the lead to five points, and Florida ran out of time to regain the lead. Florida’s Bernice Mosby converted a three-point play with 40 seconds left to cut the edge it to two.

The Gators’ last chance came when Vanessa Hayden made the first free throw but missed the second

with 17.5 seconds left. Tashia Morehead got the rebound for the Gators and called a timeout, but Danielle Santos missed a jumper for Florida when play restarted and Georgia got the ball back.

Hayden led the Gators with 26 points and Mosby had 17.

Florida beat Georgia by 10 points in both of the teams’ regular-season meetings.

The Lady Bulldogs haven’t reached the semifinals since 2001 when they went on to win the tournament.

Florida, the fourth seed, had a bye in the first round.

Hayden and Thomas, the teams’ senior centers, provided most of the game’s drama.

Thomas sat out 19 minutes of the first half because she picked up two fouls in the first minute and had no points.

Thomas got almost seven minutes into the second half when she picked up her fourth foul and had to go to the bench again.

Hayden got into foul trouble, too. Her last three fouls were caused when she knocked down Thomas.

The teams were tied at 36 after a streaky first half. Florida took advantage of Thomas’ absence early and went up 22-11 after a 13-0 run while she was sitting on the bench. But the Lady Bulldogs countered with a 14-0 spurt that put them ahead 27-24 with 4:52 remaining before the break.

# Pierce leads Celtics to fourth straight win

**BOSTON** (AP)—Paul Pierce scored 24 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and had eight assists to lead the Boston Celtics to their fourth straight win, 94-90 over the Washington Wizards on Friday night.

Ricky Davis scored 13 of his 17 points in the second half and Mark Blount added 17 points for the Celtics, whose winning streak is their longest under interim coach John Carroll. They won five straight in December under Jim O'Brien.

"I think the chemistry is starting to come together," Pierce said. "This was a big win for us. This was a team that we are battling with for the eighth spot for the playoffs."

Gilbert Arenas had his fourth consecutive strong game, leading Washington with 26 points. It was the Wizards' second loss in their last six games and dropped them to 6-23 on the road.

"You have to give (Boston) credit," Wizards coach Eddie Jordan said. "They picked it up, they denied us."

## Magic 101, Hawks 96

In Orlando, Florida, Tracy McGrady had 28 points and Tyronn Lue scored eight consecutive points in the final 1:42 for Orlando's third victory over the Atlanta this season.

The Magic, who shot 51.9 percent, got 16 points from Juwan Howard and 14 from reserve Drew Gooden. Lue had his fifth consecutive game in double figures, shooting 8-of-11 and scoring 20.

## Knicks 109, Raptors 103

In Toronto, Stephon Marbury had 35 points, and Nazr Mohammed had a season-high 20 points and 18 rebounds to make New York coach Lenny Wilkens a winner in his return to Toronto.

Wilkens returned to Toronto for the first time since being fired after last season. Fans booed his introduction.

New York moved 1 1/2 games ahead of Toronto for sixth place in the Eastern Conference.

Vince Carter had 32 points and nine assists for the Raptors, who have lost 11 of 12. Rod Strickland, signed by the Raptors earlier in the day, shot just 2-for-10. New York outrebounded Toronto 49-37, including 19-8 on the offensive glass.

## Rockets 112, Timberwolves 109

In Minneapolis, Yao Ming scored 27 points and Steve Francis added 25 for Houston, which had lost eight straight on the road.

Minnesota had a chance to tie the game with 3.4 seconds left,



Boston Celtics' Ricky Davis reacts after scoring a key basket in the third quarter against the Washington Wizards at the Fleet Center, Friday, March 5, 2004, in Boston.

but Troy Hudson's 3-pointer hit the front of the rim. The Timberwolves got a second chance with 3.1 seconds left after Adrian Griffin missed two free throws, but Kevin Garnett's straightaway 3-point attempt was way off.

Cuttino Mobley had 18 points and Maurice Taylor added 16 off the bench for Houston.

Garnett had 32 points and 18 rebounds, and Sam Cassell had 25 points and 13 assists to lead Minnesota. The Timberwolves lost for just the third time in 12 games.

## Spurs 113, Mavericks 100

In San Antonio, Tony Parker scored 25 points, Hedo Turkoglu added 21 and San Antonio put together two big first-half runs and then held off a fourth-quarter comeback from Dallas.

Dirk Nowitzki, held to four points in the first three periods, went 7-for-9 in the fourth for 17 points as the Mavericks slashed a 26-point deficit to 95-90 with nearly three minutes remaining.

Malik Rose added 18 points and 10 rebounds for San Antonio, which played its fourth straight game without top scorer and rebounder Tim Duncan. Nesterovic had his fourth straight double-double with 13 points and 15 rebounds.

## Cavaliers 88, Hornets 85

In New Orleans, LeBron James scored 19 points and Carlos Boozer had 18 as Cleveland beat New Orleans.

James hit a 3-pointer with 1:22 left to put Cleveland ahead 84-83, and Boozer made a pair of free throws with 6 seconds remaining for the final margin.

Jamal Mashburn—who made a late 3 to force overtime in a Hornets' victory Wednesday night—had a chance to do it again, but this time his long-range fade was off the mark.

Tony Battie added 12 points for the Cavaliers, while Jeff McInnis had 11 assists. Baron Davis led New Orleans with 26 points, hitting four 3-pointers.

## Pacers 96, Jazz 88

In Salt Lake City, Ron Artest scored eight of his 17 points in the fourth quarter and Reggie Miller hit a 3-pointer with 24.9 seconds remaining as Indiana downed Utah.

Jermaine O'Neal had 30 points and 10 rebounds and Fred Jones scored 10 for the Pacers, who blew a 15-point lead and needed to rally for their fourth straight win.

Andrei Kirilenko had 19 points, nine rebounds and five blocks for Utah, which had won four straight.

The Jazz outrebounded the Pacers 42-29, but Indiana made up for it at the free throw line, going 34-for-38. Indiana, which swept the Jazz for the first time since the 1999-2000 season, has won eight of 10.

## Lakers 99, SuperSonics 91

In Los Angeles, Shaquille O'Neal took over after Kobe Bryant went out early with a shoulder injury to score 32 points in the Los Angeles Lakers' win over Seattle.

Bryant hurt his right shoulder in a collision with Seattle's Reggie Evans in the first minute of the game and left the arena to have an MRI. There was no immediate report on the severity of the injury.

The Lakers' star underwent surgery on the same shoulder this past offseason, and also missed six games earlier this year after he sprained it on Jan. 12 in a collision with Cleveland's Kedrick Brown.

O'Neal added eight rebounds and six assists as Los Angeles won for the ninth time in 11 games.

## Nets 78, Warriors 74

In Oakland, California, Richard Jefferson scored 23 points as New Jersey made a late rally to beat Golden State for another victory without Jason Kidd.

Jason Richardson scored 22 points for the Warriors, who lost their fourth straight. Mike Dunleavy had 20—but Golden State was shut out in the final 3:59, blowing another home game with a pathetic fourth-quarter effort on offense.

Lucious Harris' jumper with 1:58 left gave New Jersey a 75-74 lead—its first of the second half. Jefferson then drove for an acrobatic layup, and Golden State couldn't hit its next two shots.

The Nets were whistled for a shot-clock violation with 5.9 seconds left, but Richardson accidentally kicked the ball out of bounds on the inbounds play. Kerry Kittles, who scored 17 points, hit one free throw to clinch it.

## TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

### NBA Standings

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

##### Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New Jersey	38	23	.623	—
New York	28	35	.444	11
Boston	27	36	.429	12
Miami	26	36	.419	12 1-2
Philadelphia	24	38	.387	14 1-2
Washington	20	40	.333	17 1-2
Orlando	18	46	.281	21 1-2

##### Central Division

Indiana	46	16	.742	—
Detroit	39	25	.609	8
Milwaukee	33	28	.541	12 1-2
New Orleans	33	29	.532	13
Cleveland	26	36	.419	20
Toronto	26	36	.419	20
Atlanta	20	42	.323	26
Chicago	18	43	.295	27 1-2

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

##### Midwest Division

Minnesota	44	18	.710	—
San Antonio	41	21	.661	3
Dallas	39	22	.639	4 1-2
Memphis	37	24	.607	6 1-2
Houston	35	26	.574	8 1-2
Denver	33	29	.532	11
Utah	31	31	.500	13

##### Pacific Division

Sacramento	45	15	.750	—
L.A. Lakers	40	21	.656	5 1-2
Portland	29	32	.475	16 1-2
Seattle	27	35	.435	19
Golden State	25	35	.417	20
L.A. Clippers	25	35	.417	20
Phoenix	21	41	.339	25

#### Yesterday's Games

Orlando 101, Atlanta 96  
New York 109, Toronto 103  
Boston 94, Washington 90  
San Antonio 113, Dallas 100  
Houston 112, Minnesota 109  
Cleveland 88, New Orleans 85  
Indiana 96, Utah 88  
L.A. Lakers 99, Seattle 91  
New Jersey 78, Golden State 74

### Men's College Basketball

#### EAST

Columbia 81, Brown 74  
Indiana, Pa. 73, Cheyney 71  
Penn 81, Dartmouth 59  
Princeton 60, Harvard 51  
Yale 64, Cornell 61

#### SOUTH

Bethune-Cookman 85, Florida A&M 83  
Campbellsville 75, Pikeville 65  
Coppin St. 68, Morgan St. 60  
Georgetown, Ky. 90, Lambuth 69  
McNeese St. 81, Nicholls St. 64  
Northwestern St. 67, Louisiana-Monroe 59

#### MIDWEST

Saint Louis 72, Houston 69, OT

#### SOUTHWEST

Sam Houston St. 107, Lamar 85  
Stephen F. Austin 72, Texas St. 56  
Texas-San Antonio 106, SE Louisiana 86

#### FAR WEST

Utah St. 64, Idaho 60

#### TOURNAMENT

##### America East Conference First Round

New Hampshire 43, Albany, N.Y. 38  
Stony Brook 65, UMBC 59

##### Atlantic Sun Conference Semifinals

Troy St. 63, Georgia St. 62  
UCF 64, Belmont 62

##### CACC Tournament Semifinals

Bloomfield 81, Holy Family 77

#### Colonial Athletic Association

##### First Round

N.C.-Wilmington 44, James Madison 41  
Towson 70, William & Mary 65

#### Great Lakes Conference

##### Semifinals

Findlay 74, Northwd, Mich. 61  
Michigan Tech 69, Gannon 59

#### Great Lakes Valley Conference

##### Quarterfinals

Lewis 72, Quincy 64  
S. Indiana 83, N. Kentucky 74  
St. Joseph's, Ind. 82, Kentucky Wesleyan 71

#### Horizon League

##### Second Round

Butler 72, Wis.-Green Bay 50  
Detroit 60, Loyola of Chicago 55

#### MIAA Tournament

##### Quarterfinals

Washburn 91, Missouri-Rolla 74

#### Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference

##### First Round

Iona 68, Canisius 66  
Rider 75, Loyola, Md. 67  
Siena 73, Marist 64

#### Missouri Valley Conference

##### First Round

Evansville 63, Indiana St. 59  
Illinois St. 76, Bradley 56

#### NCCAA South Region

##### Second Round

Palm Beach Atlantic 75, Tenn. Temple 67

#### North Central Conference

##### Semifinals

Nebraska-Omaha 81, N. Dakota St. 74  
South Dakota 73, S. Dakota St. 69

#### Ohio Valley Conference

##### Semifinals

Austin Peay 62, E. Kentucky 57  
Murray St. 94, Morehead St. 72

#### Peach Belt Tournament

##### Quarterfinals

Clayton St. 66, Augusta St. 42  
Kennesaw 96, S.C.-Aiken 61

#### SIAC Tournament

##### Semifinals

Benedict College 89, Lane 75  
Morehouse 76, Miles 66

#### Southern Conference

##### Semifinals

Chattanooga 90, Georgia Southern 87, OT  
ETSU 96, Davidson 84

#### West Coast Conference

##### First Round

Loyola Marymount 82, Portland 77

### Sports Transactions

#### MLB

**ANAHEIM ANGELS**-Agreed to terms with RHP Francisco Cordova and RHP Felipe Arredondo on one-year contracts.

**CHICAGO WHITE SOX**-Sent LHP Corwin Malone outright to Charlotte of the International League. Released RHP Robert Person from his minor league contract.

**CLEVELAND INDIANS**-Agreed to terms with C Josh Bard, INF Casey Blake, OF Coco Crisp, RHP Jason Davis, RHP Chad Durbin, INF Travis Hafner and C Victor Martinez on one-year contracts. Named Ruben Felix bullpen catcher.

**KANSAS CITY ROYALS**-Re-signed SS Angel Berroa, LHP Jeremy Affeldt and OF Aaron Guiel. Agreed to terms with LHP Chris George, LHP Jamie Cerda, RHP Jorge Vazquez, and INF Jarrod Patterson on one-year contracts.

**OAKLAND ATHLETICS**-Agreed to terms

with RHP Rich Harden, INF Mark Ellis, INF Esteban German, INF Adam Morrissey, OF Eric Byrnes, OF Mike Edwards and OF Jason Grabowski on one-year contracts.

**LOS ANGELES DODGERS**-Agreed to terms with OF Reggie Abercrombie, INF Willy Aybar, RHP Yhency Brazoban, RHP Andrew Brown, OF Chin-Feng Chen, LHP Steve Colyer, RHP Jason Frasor, RHP Joel Hanrahan, C Koyie Hill, SS Cesar Izturis, RHP Edwin Jackson, LHP Hong-Chih Kuo, LHP Orlando Rodriguez, INF-OF Jason Romano, C David Ross, OF Wilkin Ruan and INF Joe Thurston on one-year contracts.

**SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS**-Exercised their 2005 option on the contract of Felipe Alou, manager.

#### NBA

**MILWAUKEE BUCKS**-Signed G Brevin Knight. Released G Anthony Goldwire.

**TORONTO RAPTORS**-Signed G Rod Strickland for the remainder of the season. Waived G Jannero Pargo.

#### NFL

**ATLANTA FALCONS**-Signed CB Jason Webster to a six-year contract.

**CAROLINA PANTHERS**-Agreed to terms with LB Jessie Armstead on a one-year contract. Released CB Terry Cousin.

**CINCINNATI BENGALS**-Signed K Shayne Graham to five-year contract. Terminated the contract of CB Artrell Hawkins, making him a free agent.

**CLEVELAND BROWNS**-Released RB Jamel White.

**DETROIT LIONS**-Agreed to terms with OL Damien Woody.

**JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS**-Signed TE Todd Yoder to a three-year contract.

**KANSAS CITY CHIEFS**-Agreed to terms with DE Eric Hicks on a six-year contract.

**MIAMI DOLPHINS**-Signed CB Reggie Howard and OL Jeno James to six-year contracts and S Chris Atkins to a three-year contract.

**MINNESOTA VIKINGS**-Agreed to terms with CB Antoine Winfield on a six-year contract.

**NEW YORK JETS**-Re-signed G Brent Smith.

**SAN DIEGO CHARGERS**-Signed OL Mike Goff to a five-year contract.

**SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS**-Re-signed CB Ahmed Plummer to a five-year contract.

**TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS**-Re-signed TE Ricky Dudley.

**TENNESSEE TITANS**-Traded WR Justin McCareins to the New York Jets for a 2004 second-round draft pick.

**WASHINGTON REDSKINS**-Signed LB Marcus Washington to a six-year contract.

#### COLLEGE

**FAIRMONT STATE**-Announced the resignation of Butch Haswell, men's basketball coach.

**FLORIDA ATLANTIC**-Named Gary Nord quarterbacks coach and Fred O'Connor special assistant to the head coach. Moved Chris Vagotis to defensive line coach.

**GRAND VALLEY STATE**-Announced the resignation of Terry Smith, men's basketball coach.

**MARYLAND-BALTIMORE COUNTY**-Placed Tom Sullivan, men's basketball coach, on indefinite paid administrative leave. Named Randy Monroe men's interim basketball coach.

**NORTH CAROLINA-PEMBROKE**-Named John Haskins women's basketball coach.

**SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**-Announced the resignation of James Green, men's basketball coach. Named Jeff Norwood interim coach.

**STONEHILL**-Named David McLaughlin men's basketball coach.

By The Associated Press

## The Week in Sports

# America's pastime is back

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY MARK RABAGO AND SHAN SEMAN, REPORTERS

America's pastime came back to action last week as the 2004 season of the Saipan Major League unfurled last Wednesday at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field in Susupe.

It was an auspicious debut for last year's runner-up Pirates, as they avenged their loss in the finals last year with an 11-10 comeback victory over defending champions Northern Yankees.

The start of Saipan's amateur baseball league comes a few weeks after the 2004 Little League opened shop. The stomping grounds of baseball's stars of tomorrow has seen the Blue Jays, Pirates and Kagman maintain their perfect records in the Major Division.

In basketball, action in the Mobil

Oil Marianas Co-ed Basketball Tournament and BANMI Budweiser Cup continued to heat up. The 40-and-over Masters Basketball League also entered its second week of competition.

The Saipan Bowling Association also held its Pepsi King of the Lanes last Sunday and Monday with Ruselle Zapanta and Emi Williams emerging victorious in the men's and women's division, respectively.

Boxing also returned to the islands last February 28, as the Thrilla in Saipan drew close to 800 people at the Garapan Central Park.

Last week also saw the CPA Flyers top the Tinian Delegation Fast-pitch Softball Cup and the 12th Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival unfold at the Pacific Islands Club.



Action from last Sunday's Senior League Division match between the Mariners and the Tanapag Braves at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

Norman Tenorio of the Joeten Pirates is greeted by teammate Craig Sanchez after getting the third out in the sixth inning of play against the Northern Yankees during last Wednesday's Saipan Major League 2004 season opener at the Palacios Field.



John Paul Cabrera of the Marlins has a chat with his coach and catcher. Cabrera was later replaced and moved to shortstop.

Saipan's Aguinaldo Tesado has his arm raised in triumph by referee Al Taitano after his bout against Robert Fajardo of Tinian. Fajardo called it quits before the start of third round.



Roland Galag of Dai-Ichi Hotel goes up for a shot during last Tuesday's Mobil Oil Marianas Co-ed Invitational Basketball Tournament match against Hyatt Regency at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. Dai-Ichi won 86-68.

Raj Tamang of Tinian was knocked down by Saipan's Gerald Naputi in the 1:10 mark of the second round.



Carlos Feger of Saipan breathes from the mouth in his 60-kg. fight against Jimmy Ebba of Tinian. Feger won by TKO after Ebba quit 1:30 left in the third round.

MBI Cheetajz strike a pose at the start of the CNMI Billiards League last February 25.



Bowling aficionados Andrew Mesina, right, and friends wait eagerly for results of the February Pepsi King of the Lanes Tournament Tuesday night at the Capitol Bowling Center.



### Super Bowl champ Pats lose another starter

The Super Bowl champion New England Patriots lost another starter Friday when Damien Woody, one of the most sought-after free-agent offensive linemen, agreed to join the Detroit Lions.

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# Saipan Tribune Sports

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

# Knockout extravaganza

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY MARK RABAGO  
REPORTER

Knockouts were the order of the day when four amateur bouts and two professional fights were featured in the Thrilla in Saipan held at the Garapan Central Park last February 28.

With five of the six bouts not going the distance, the event showcased the knockout power of the fighters.

It was evident right from the start, that the nearly 800 people who crowded the venue would have their money's worth.

Despite waiting close to two hours for the opening fight and drenched with sweat due to the humidity, the audience was up on their feet as Aguinaldo Tesado of Saipan and Robert Fajardo of Tinian went at it in the 54-kg. division.

After going back and forth in the first two rounds, Tesado would eventually stop Fajardo by TKO after he cut his opponent's lip. Fajardo quit right before the start of the third and final round.

The next bout pitted Saipan's Carlos Feger against Tinian's Jimmy Ebba. The fight had a comic start to it, as both fighters rushed out of their corners even before the opening bell, mistaking the warning whistle as the signal to begin.

Feger proved he was the classier fighter early on and tagged Ebba with sharp straights to the head. Ebba was always at the defensive and employed his best turtle imitation by taking cover. In the end, Feger would triumph after his opponent quit at the 1:30 mark of the final round.

Tinian's pride Joey Adriano then finally scored one for the visitors after he knocked down Saipan's Rick Naputi 1:10 into the opening round of their light middleweight fight. The gangling Adriano put Naputi to dreamland with a vicious barrage of left and right hooks.

Saipan's Gerald Naputi then avenged his namesake's loss with an equally brutal mauling of Tinian's Raj Tamang in their middleweight bout.

Naputi started sluggishly as his headgear came off as many times as he landed shots. But he got it all together in the second round and proceeded to lick Tamang with repeated blows to the head and body. Tamang's fall came at the 1:10 mark of the second round when Naputi connected on a stinging roundhouse right that floored his opponent.

Filipino knockout artist Bert Cano and South Korean fighter So Jung Suk then showed contrasting styles, but nevertheless did their fans and countrymen proud by delivering victories in the twin main events of the program.

Cano sparred with a resilient Kang Jun Hoon for four-and-a-half rounds before unleashing an unforgettable attack in the fifth that floored his opponent.

After bedlam ensued because of premature celebrations by Cano's supporters, the Korean lasted



Filipino Bert Cano connects to the body of Korean Kang Jung Hoon in their bantamweight bout in the Thrilla in Saipan.



Korean So Jung Suk tags Filipino Joel Avila with a sneaky right hook in their super bantamweight fight.



Kang goes down for the last time in the eighth round as his trainer Jung Yong Mun could only look helplessly.

two more rounds before finally succumbing to the Filipino's fiery attack at 2:15 in the eighth round.

Cano said that Kang fought a whale of a bout and that he had thought the Korean was made of steel because of his ability to absorb punishment.

So, for his part, stuck to his game plan and upset former WBC Intercontinental champion Joel

Avila by majority decision in the nightcap.

Avila apparently was slowed down by his rapid weight loss and was reduced to target practice by So's sleek head and body shots.

The Koreans earned \$3,000 each for the fight, while the Filipinos, who were fighting out of Tinian, each received \$1,500.